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A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy

(COLOR)

Pleasant, modest Woody Allen pic. Okay outlook.

Hollywood, July 12.

An Orion Pictures release thru Warner Bros., produced by Robert Greenhut. Exec producer, Charles H. Joffe. Features entire cast. Written and directed by Woody Allen. Camera (Technicolor), Gordon Willis; editor, Susan E. Morse; sound, James Sabat; production design, Mel Bourne; costumes, Santo Loquasto; assistant director, Frederic B. Blankfein; associate producer, Michael Peyser; art direction, Speed Hopkins; music, Felix Mendelssohn classics. Reviewed at VIP Screening Room, Century City, Calif. July 12, 1982. (MPAA Rating: PG.) Running time: 88 MINS.

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| Andrew | Woody Allen |
| Ariel | Mia Farrow |
| Leopold | Jose Ferrer |
| Dulcy | Julie Hagerty |
| Maxwell | Tony Roberts |
| Adrian | Mary Steenburgen |

Woody Allen's "A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy" is a pleasant disappointment, pleasant because he gets all the laughs he goes for in a visually charming, sweetly paced picture, a disappointment because he doesn't go for more. In any case, Allen's name and comedy in the title are bound to attract business.

Though many may search for hidden homages in "Midsummer," it's a welcomingly simple story on the surface, totally dependent on its characters. They can be addled without throwing the audience off. In short, there's not a lot to guess at unless you love to guess.

The time is the turn of the century, the place a lovely old farmhouse in upstate New York, surrounded by beautiful forests, glowing meadows and babbling brooks. Here, Wall St. stockbroker Allen spends his spare time inventing odd devices and trying to bed his own wife, Mary Steenburgen, who has turned cold.

Arriving for a visit — and also a wedding — are Steenburgen's cousin Jose Ferrer, a stuffy, pedantic scholar, and his bride to be, Mia Farrow, a former near-nympho who's decided to settle down with Ferrer's intellect.

Also arriving are Allen's best friend, who else but Tony Roberts, an amorous physician and his current short-term fling, Julie Hagerty, a nurse dedicated to the study of anatomy and all its possibilities.

Complications: Allen had a chaste summer romance with Farrow years before, chaste only because he respected her, not knowing her habit of dallying with anybody who asked. In his current frustrated state over Steenburgen, the sight of Farrow stirs Allen to painful memories of what he missed. She, in turn, still hankers for the only guy who never asked.

Farrow can't help but flirt, too, with Roberts, who is stricken by love for the first time in his life. Meanwhile, Ferrer, pillar though he be, would like one more night as a bachelor, preferably with the willing Hagerty, who is also coaching Steenburgen on fine points Allen might appreciate.

With this daffy assortment and Allen's gift for laugh-lines, the picture can't avoid being fun, even at a rather leisurely pace in keeping with its times. Allen, who earlier in his career insisted that an audience could never be allowed to stop laughing, is now content with dropping chuckles, an occasional guffaw and sporadic sight gags only when it suits him.

To tell much more would spoil the fun there is. But the characters all function well and Hagerty is a joy. As usual, Gordon Willis' camera gets just what Allen goes after, helped here by Mel Bourne's production design and Santo Loquasto's costumes. —Har.